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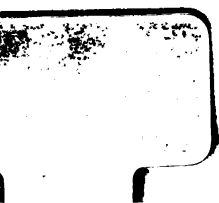
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*A commercial traveller's
reminiscences*

Richard Symons



"I long to hear the story of your life, which must take the ear strangely."—*Tempest*.

"Pray you now buy it."—*Winter's Tale*.



REMINISCENCES

The Profits on the sale of this Publication will be given
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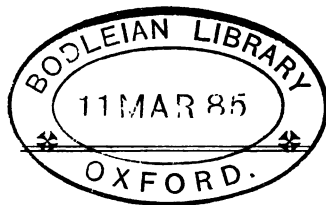
A

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER'S

REMINISCENCES:

BY

R. SYMONS.



LONDON:

CATTY & DOBSON, 4, PILGRIM STREET, E.C.

1884.

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P R E F A C E.



“FOOLS rush in where Angels fear to tread,” is one of those time-worn axioms which are being daily exemplified, as may readily be seen by anyone who watches the shadows cast by the “fierce light” that the Press brings to bear upon the habits and homes of the humblest subject as well as upon the movements and actions of the August Ruler of our vast Empire—God bless and preserve Her Majesty for many a long year to come!—and it was not without a certain amount of trepidation, lest I should be classed in the former category, that I allowed myself to be persuaded to o’erstep the bounds of my “nomadic” vocation, and seek publicity beyond the sphere of my own circle. Having been from childhood imbued with a reverential respect for the Fourth Estate and our Literati as a body, I have looked upon their domain as almost sacred ground, and in venturing to tread—hesitatingly and awkwardly I know—the “ethereal space” surrounding it, I am doing so only at the urgent wish and desire of many of my associates, customers, and other—who I may call “outside”

—friends, whose esteem I regard as well worth striving for, and with the sole purpose of endeavouring to create a more widespread interest in, and directly benefiting, the Benevolent Institutions* which are connected with the honourable “fellowship,” of whom I am proud to be a member. I was cheered and encouraged to make the effort in a way that I shall never forget—I was told that many incidents must have occurred to me or have come within my cognizance which were worthy of taking a place in current literature as

“Abstracts and brief chronicles of the time.”

And when I pleaded my imperfections and inability, my attention was drawn to the idea which Longfellow has so beautifully expressed in “The Building of the Ship”:—

“Ah ! how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth Love’s command !
It is the heart, and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain.”

Another thought, too, was suggested. My “reminiscences” as a Commercial Traveller extend now over a quarter of a century, and how better could the “SILVER WEDDING” of myself to my profession be celebrated than in this way ? The “marriage” has been a happy, if not a fruitful, one—for “long stockings” laden with “golden grain” are the exception “on the road”—and I felt if I could afford but a modicum of pleasure by any “scribblings” of mine and at the same time aid, however slightly, the funds of the Institutions to which allusion has

* See page 6.

been made it would be a departure in my existence that I should ever have reason to revert to with pardonable pride, unalloyed with any sordid motive or personal gratification.

The Sketches that are here drafted out have been compiled in a rather hap-hazard manner, at brief intervals of leisure, and are offered simply as "samples"—good, bad, and indifferent, it may be—from a stock, which, were time and ability forthcoming, could supply material for a far more pretentious tome than now

"Sails forth into the sea of life."

One more quotation, which speaks for itself, and I have done :—

"If perhaps these 'lines' of mine should sound not well in strangers' ears,
They have only to bethink them that it happens so with theirs ;
For so long as words, like mortals, call a fatherland their own,
They will be most highly valued where they are best and longest known."

R. SYMONS.

SOUTH GROVE,

PECKHAM, S.E.,

November, 1884.



“OUR” BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS.



I SAY “institutions,” because, although I am going to give a few figures respecting the one known as “The Commercial Travellers’ Benevolent Institution,” I would also especially commend, as equally deserving, the Schools, which have grown to large dimensions, and are now accommodatong between 300 and 400 orphans. God prosper such handiwork, say I, with all sincerity.

Mr. Thomas Binstead—whose name ought to be engraved in “letters of gold” on every Traveller’s heart—holds the high position of Chairman of the Board of Management of the C.T.B.I., and the great success which has attended the institution is mainly due to his noble and self-denying labours. The subjoined statistics indicate the marvellous progress made during the last twenty-years :—

		1861.	1883.
Invested Capital		£3,500	£27,514
Dividends		92	1,110
Donations and Subscriptions		911	7,000
Annuitants		600	6,320
Benevolent Day Contributions		153	1,115

The present “Suspense Fund,” from which immediate relief is granted to deserving cases pending final election, amounts to £3,400.

The foregoing statement, while satisfactory and gratifying, is still not nearly all that can and ought to be done for such a cause. Let each one ask himself “Have I followed out fully the Divine injunction,

'Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you'?" and let our motto henceforth be "Excelsior!"

While I am upon this topic, the names of two travellers come naturally to my "pen's point"—Mr. Dryden and Mr. Mannering Bolton. The former is a lineal descendant of the celebrated poet of that name, and possessing many of the qualities of his famous ancestor—he is also a facile sketcher. These gentlemen have been the life and soul of amateur dramatic performances which have been organised for the benefit of the institutions, and in a variety of ways they have forwarded the good work.

Let me add a concluding line or two with respect to the C. T. Schools at Pinner (Mr Henry Lendon, secretary): In the Circular Letter relating to "Orphans' Day, October 29th, 1884," addressed to the "Chairman of the Day," at every Commercial Hotel throughout the country, I find it stated that although the expense of maintaining the large number of children in the Schools has been partly met by the very liberal response which has hitherto been made to the Simultaneous Appeal on "Orphans' Day," there has been a serious diminution in the number of Annual Subscribers. The Board say: "To maintain, and if possible to increase the existing number of inmates, and to carry on the work of the Schools with vigour and efficiency, a large increase in this source of income is absolutely necessary," and they, therefore, "venture to hope that all friends of the Institution will exert their influence, and each try to add at least *one new member to the list of Annual Subscribers.*" VERB. SAP.!



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*"There is a kind of character in thy life,
That, to the observer, doth thy history
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do—
Not light them for themselves: for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 't were all alike
As if we had them not."*—MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

A COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER'S REMINISCENCES.



MY FIRST JOURNEY—THE RULE OF THE ROAD—UPS AND DOWNS OF A TRAVELLER'S LIFE.

LOOKING back through the long vista of years to the time when I was selected by the Firm (whom I have now still the pleasure to serve), to represent them in the Eastern Counties and Kent, I can well remember the varied feelings with which I entered upon my duties. I was told the journey would be about three months, and that it must be driven. I was not asked if I knew anything about driving—and I didn't—but was jocularly reminded by Mr. H. that—

“The rule of the road is a paradox quite,
If you keep to the *left* you are sure to be *right*.”

Off I started from the centre of the City, over London Bridge, and that, too, without an accident—not bad for a novice—and down to Dartford the same day. Introduced myself to several customers, and succeeded in sending up a small sheet of orders. I had an idea that it was quite as easy to go out and sell goods as it was to serve customers when they came from the country to the warehouses, forgetting that they made the journey expressly

to supply their wants, and that they must have the goods. However, I soon found, in soliciting orders, that samples had to be introduced with inducements to buy, and that I had to contend against a host of trials, troubles, and vexations ; in short, the

“Thousand natural shocks”

to which “Commercials” are heir. The young Traveller is, indeed, soon made or unmade—it rests with himself, and if he succeed, it is an evidence of tact and judgment and an ability to overcome difficulties—aye, and temptations—that are not often met with in the general run of professional life. As a rule, it takes a long time to secure a connection of importance, and years elapse before you can gain the confidence of some people ; but when once they give you the “right hand of fellowship,” it is not easily lost. My experience has taught me also that if a Traveller call on twenty customers per day he has twenty different natures to deal with, and must ignore or wink at many slights, rebuffs, and annoyances. On the other hand, he should, in fairness, consider the position of his “clients” *pro tem.*, as the best of them are not always in the same humour, and they may be labouring from drawbacks he (the Traveller) wots not of—bad debts, family afflictions, children “down” with the measles, whooping cough, *et hoc genus omne*. He should, therefore, with becoming dignity, meet them in the proper spirit, and probably on his next journey he will be amply repaid for his prudence and patience.

AN Englishman's house is said to be his “Castle”—which is true enough no doubt to a great extent, but a Commercial is not one of the lucky sort who can “live at home in ease.” He is a “land sailor,” having to be here, there, and everywhere, and never knowing when he may be called from one part of his

journey to another, or, it mayhap, that he is wanted to supply an unexpected vacancy in quite another direction, and visit altogether fresh faces and scenes. He has few, and in many cases irregular, opportunities of being at home for long together, and he has to "make much" of the domestic felicity that then comes within his grasp. The "Commercial Room" is mostly his abiding place—and it is here, amidst the "freemasonry" of kindness and good fellowship which—thank heaven—pervades our "order" that his changeful life is rendered anyhow enduring. The one drawback is the absence of the fair sex—whose softening, soothing, and beneficent influence is a charm beyond compare—but even this in the course of time may be rectified, and as lady orators, lady doctors, lady members of school and other boards, &c., are becoming "the rage," why should there not be Lady Commercial Travellers!!? The theme could be pursued *ad infinitum*.



TRADE PECULIARITIES—THE "EXECUTION GROUND"—TRAVELLERS'
DIFFICULTIES—ARM-CHAIR PHILOSOPHY.

EVERY county has its peculiarities in trade, regulated often by its geographical position. The inhabitants of the Eastern Counties—with which I am more particularly acquainted—are noted for their kindly feelings towards old friends, to whom they will stick as long as respect lasts; but new faces often fare badly, and have to "bide their time," the long interval that ensues before they are taken by the hand sometimes proving a rock upon which they are wrecked. East Anglia has not infrequently been termed the "execution ground," and although it is strictly agricultural and consequently (at present) depressed, yet on account of its handiness to the Metropolis more travellers overrun it—in proportion

to its population—than any other part of the country; and customers are more frequently going to Town. I have many a time heard Travellers say they hadn't taken a "line" for days. Then comes the arm-chair philosophy of the counting-houses: Oh, that *they* could see the difficulties!

So much by way of introduction, and now for the "Reminiscences!"



A "NOD'S AS GOOD AS A WINK," ETC., AND MAY LEAD TO BUSINESS.

I CALLED on a tradesman with my "badge"—a parcel—under my arm; he met me half way, and, without speaking, motioned me out. The "dumb show" was sufficiently suggestive and I silently obeyed. It was the first time I had been to the shop, and, being rather sensitive, I keenly felt the implied slight; still, I resolved to try him again, thinking I might catch him in a happier mood. I returned in about two hours' time, when he laughingly said, "I thought I ordered you out." I replied, "Well, Sir, it was tantamount to an *order*, and I trust the execution of it met with your approbation; and I promise, if you will now give me a more *tangible one*, that that also shall be executed to the best of my ability." He exclaimed, "Well, my lad, upon my certificatum! I think you deserve it." He gave me a splendid order, and has ever since treated me as a gentleman.



WORKING A "ROUGH GEM."

ON another occasion I was requested to temporarily fill the position of a colleague who was ill, and who travelled in the

West. He particularly desired me to call upon a certain tradesman who had declined to do business with him—generally snubbing him when he sought to elicit a “line”—on account of a misunderstanding with the Firm. Having gleaned the “ins and outs” of the case, I bethought me of a *dernier ressort*, which, if it failed, would leave matters no worse than they were. Upon my arrival there I left my man with the samples outside. Mr. — was not at home, but was expected soon, and in a very short time he returned ; and wasn't he a caution to look at? Let me attempt to describe him : a “six-footer,” of powerful frame, bull-necked ; black, short, crisp, and curly hair ; and a kind of chronic hoarse voice—enough ! I introduced myself, and directly I named the Firm, the look of anger stood out in “bold relief” ; and, knitting his eyebrows, he said, in measured tones : “When—I—want—Messrs. ——— & Co.—I—will—send—for—them !” I answered, as suavely as I could, “Well, Sir, as there was an advice card sent you, and you replied not, I considered that you had sent for us—and here I am, your humble servant !” “Do you see that door ?” was his rejoinder. “Well, Sir, I have been waiting here a quarter of an hour to see you, and having had ample time to glance round your magnificent premises, I consider a large trade ought to be done here, and, no doubt, under your management, a large trade is done here ; but, touching the question of ‘the door,’ I should have it grained light oak ——” “What the —— do you mean, Sir ?” he irately queried. “In reality, Sir, I mean business.” “Then I don't want to buy.” “But I have something to give you.” “'Tis a lie !” “No doubt a lie is told, but not by me ; I'll try and find out if you'll kindly wait one minute.” I speedily fetched a bundle of patterns—“Throw-outs”—and gave him

two or three, saying I had finished with them, and that he might appropriate them to his own use—so much for the lie! I continued: “And now, Sir, I can see you are too much of a business man to ‘cut off your nose to spite your face,’ and if I can shew goods a trifle cheaper, occasionally, than our neighbours, what should you care of whom you bought?” “A fine speech young man”—(he was a little frothy at the mouth). “Now let me see the marvellous lines of which you boast so much.” I did so, and sold him a good parcel. On a few other visits he patronized me, and promised to do with my friend when he recovered. The latter subsequently informed me that he was at first received with a slight touch of the old manner—I suppose to keep up appearances for a time—but the customer said, “Mind, I shall do business with you for the sake of that young rascal of yours, for he made me promise, and I feel myself bound to keep it.” This customer was a “rough gem,” who wanted a little working, and, by accident, I was lucky.



A REPREHENSIBLE TRICK.

In the town of I——, I called on a large customer, and shewed him samples of a big job lot of a certain fabric. He thought them marvellously cheap, and gave me a very large order, on the condition that he had them to himself (the fact was, he had already a large stock of the same goods, and did not want me to show them elsewhere), and asked me not to send them to him for a month; and as I was driving on my journey he knew I could not return for a long time to the town. In the meantime he wrote to the house to cancel the order, without assigning a reason or writing to me—a cunning

and unprincipled mode of business. I thought of the Scotch motto, "If once you take me in, oh ! fie upon you ; but if you take me in the second time, oh ! fie upon me."



A SINGULAR "COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENT."

At Folkestone I called (several times) on a good customer of the house I represented, but never could see him, in fact I never had seen him ! At last I told the foreman that I thought it was not polite nor business-like, not to "show up," as I had repeatedly advised him. No doubt the message was faithfully conveyed, for on my following journey the said foreman told me to wait a little time as Mr. J. would see me. At last he appeared and came towards me, but halted half-way and seemed struck "all of a heap." I walked up to him, bowed, and introduced myself. He shook me by the hand and faltered out, "I am pleased to see you." He gave instructions that all the things required for stock were to be looked up at once, and he made up for some of the lost time ; as the result was a good sheet of orders. Before I left, he made an appointment to meet me at the hotel in the evening. He came and when we were comfortably seated and charged, he thus addressed me : "I am anxious to tell you a little tale. Probably you observed that I looked rather confounded on seeing you—well, my intentions were to give you a thorough blowing up for the various little messages you deemed fit to leave for me, especially as I thought I ought to be the master of my own actions. However, directly I saw you, my heart leapt up in my mouth, you appeared to me a ghost or a fac-simile of my brother-in-law, who had lately died and whose widow and family

live with me. The well matured chastisement that I intended for you vanished, and I felt bound to give you an order and a good one, too." "Tis an ill wind that blows no good!"



FORGOTTEN—YET REMEMBERED.

DURING a visit to Dunmow—the “fitch of bacon” borough—I entered the Saracen’s Head Commercial Room in the evening with the customary “Good evening, gentlemen.” The conversation had taken a racing turn. I ventured to side with the party who condemned it, and remarked that the association of black-legs and card-sharpers was the worst part of it, whereupon one, who was rather *hossily* inclined, asserted that no card-sharper could ever “do” him, and he went on to relate: “I have only found one gentleman in all my experience who really puzzled me, and he certainly was the greatest masterpiece I have ever met, not only in cards, but in all kinds of legerdemain. And you”—(addressing me)—“having intimated *you* could do me—ah, my friend! I look on this picture and then on that!” “Oh! ye gods!”—I rejoined, “Thank you, Sir, I am very much obliged to you—for nothing! And who might this extraordinary individual be?” He mentioned the name (my own) and I laughingly said, “Ah! ah! I know him to be an ignoramus in many respects.” “What!” he exclaimed, “That is a hard name, and I demand an apology for thus insulting a friend of mine.” “Very good,” I answered. “I consider it is fairly put, and after an explanation, if you still think I have acted ungentlemanly I will certainly do as you require, but if on the other hand I can prove satisfactorily you have made a mistake, will you apologise?” Chorus: “Certainly, certainly.” “Then, gentle-

men, I am the man!" "What!! Good heavens, I did not recognise you! How are you, old boy?" Tableau!!



AN INTRODUCTION TO OURY, THE VIOLINIST.

A FEW years ago a friend and traveller (Mr. H.), who was also a professor of music, from Birmingham, met me at the King's Arms, East Dereham, and stated he had just had a great treat over at Mr. Mori's, surgeon dentist, where he had been invited. "I was asked," he said, "if I could play; my answer was 'a little.' I was thereupon prevailed to preside at the piano and after finishing a classical piece, an old gentleman of eighty years hobbled up and remarked 'You are an impostor, Sir.' 'How, Sir?' said I. 'Because you have just stated you played a little, but I say you play a great deal, and finer execution I have never heard. Allow me to take you by the hand, and will you also allow me to join you?' He got his violin and accompanied—I could scarcely play—the extraordinary butterfly movements and the beautiful sounds that he produced were simply marvellous. I was then informed that Mr. Oury was the celebrated James Antonio Oury, of world-wide renown, who, in company with Madame Oury (Mademoiselle de Belville, 'Queen' of pianists) spent two years with Paganini in Paris and travelled for nine years throughout Europe."



PAGANINI AND THE DENTIST.

I ALSO sought the acquaintanceship of so eminent a man, and as I generally spent my Sundays at Dereham, the old violinist became my companion. I knew him for about three years, and many hundreds of anecdotes has he told me, one of which

I will repeat. "When Paganini was first brought into this country," he said, "he was suffering martyrdom with his teeth. I suggested he should go to Cartwright, the famous dentist, and have them seen to. Well, I took him there and his jaws were found to be cankering and rotting from base metal attached to his false teeth. He was asked if he would be performed on at once and on replying 'yes,' two liveried servants were summoned to hold him, but he said he could dispense with their help and that as he had suffered much he could suffer more. The dentist scooped out a quantity of decayed bone and destroyed the teeth. Paganini felt much relieved and wanted to know the price. (I acted as interpreter, P. not knowing English.) 'Tell him,' said Cartwright, 'he can come and dine with me this evening.' 'What,' replied P., 'he first destroys my teeth and then asks me to dine with him.' 'Well, tell him I will make him the finest set of teeth that can be made, and present them to him, if he will honour me and a few private friends with a short performance on his renowned Guernarius.' It was accepted and that was the only time he ever played privately by request." Mr. Oury settled at Dereham principally on account of desiring to live with the grandson of his great master, Mr. Mori, the famous violinist. He died a few months ago, aged 83 years.



HOFFMAN AND BLIND JIMMY.

HOFFMAN, the originator of the celebrated organophonic band, became a traveller, and I met him at the Half Moon, Exeter. As we were conversing in the Commercial Room, we heard the sounds of an English concertina. We went out and ascertained that it was "Blind Jimmy"—

considered the second best player in England—who was giving a performance in the “Tap” bar, and when he knew he had a very appreciative audience he played charmingly. Hoffman became quite entranced, so much so that he was induced to give a specimen of his inimitable whistling—“When the swallows homeward fly.” Jimmy had never heard such sounds before and he, too, went into ecstasies. We invited him into our room and spent a more than enjoyable evening.



PENNY READINGS.

[From the *Kentish Journal*.]

Another of these entertainments was given at Benenden, on Tuesday, November 12th, the large schoolroom being well filled. The readings and music were, as usual, received with much applause. Mr. A. E. Hardy assisted for the first time, and if he consult the wishes of those who heard him, it certainly will not be the last. It happened fortunately that a gentleman named Symons, connected with the House of Messrs. Cook, Son, & Co., was passing through Benenden that afternoon, and being known by one or two friends to possess very high and various capabilities in the way of amusement, he was prevailed on to stay and give a little help. He played a fantasia with Mr. Streater, “Home, sweet home” (violin and piano), with remarkable skill. Later in the evening he gave a negro song, with a most extraordinary accompaniment; in fact, it mattered little to Mr. Symons whether his violin was in front of him or behind him, or whether he played the violin with the bow, or the bow with the violin. He also played a capital tune on a common tin whistle, but his

crowning performance was "The Talking Hand," in which he displayed powers of ventriloquy and mimicry of a high order. The audience was delighted. So highly was Mr. Symons appreciated that he received an invitation from Hemsted, the seat of the Right Honourable Gathorne Hardy, to exhibit his skill before the family and other friends on the following evening. He went with a few friends, and to his previous evening's performances added several conjuring tricks—capital tricks—capitally done. He astonished the listeners with "Jenny Jones," played on so rare a musical instrument as a common pair of bellows, with piano accompaniment. He manipulated cards very cleverly. "The Talking Hand" was so exceedingly well done that a repetition was asked for. Mr. Symons's entertainment lasted a little more than an hour and a half, the ladies and gentlemen expressing great pleasure throughout, while he on his part returned to Benenden delighted with everybody and everything he saw at Hemsted.

Memo :—To give point to the moral of the preceding excerpt, I may state I had the gratification of opening several new accounts on my next journey in that neighbourhood. My efforts to amuse had evidently aroused considerable sympathy and produced a result I had really not anticipated, and I felt more than ever the truth of the saying, "kind words (or actions) can never die."



AN EVENING WITH AN ASTRONOMER.

EIGHT or nine travellers were making themselves "at home" in the Rose and Crown Commercial-room, Saffron Walden, when I mentioned that Wells Church had been destroyed by lightning.

One gentleman asked me what was the chemical effect on the flints. I could not tell him and I thought it was a curious question to put. I fancied that cleverness lurked behind and plied him with a lot of questions. I felt he was not "one of us" but a "big gun" honouring our room. His answers and explanations were splendid and soon riveted general attention. A great number of the arts and sciences were discussed. We dived into the bowels of the earth and soared through ethereal space, and many were the "isms" and "ologies" that were descanted upon until the "small hours" arrived. The gentleman finished his remarks by saying, "Before I bid you adieu, I must thank you for allowing me to use your room. Your questions were many, pertinent, and to the point: I never wish to have a more appreciative audience and never had greater pleasure in giving information." He handed me his card and intimated he would be glad to see me at any time or reply to any queries on subjects within his ken. He was one of our greatest astronomers!



THRILLING INCIDENTS OF THE GREAT SNOWSTORM.

[From the *Herts and Essex Observer*.]

Many a hair's-breadth escape of the great snowstorm of Tuesday, Jan. 18th, 1881, will, for obvious reasons, remain unrecorded, except as matters of tradition in the localities in which they occurred. Some of the tragedies then enacted—much of the heroism displayed in the fatal conflict with the pitiless elements—will never be revealed until the hereafter. Who would have liked to have had made manifest to them all the hidden secrets of that appalling visitation from cloud-land? (May not there

have been at least a few pious souls, who, like the monks of Saint Bernard,

“Uttered the oft-repeated prayer?”)

Who might count the

“Voices crying through the startled air?”

Let it be hoped that each one

“Still grasped in his hand of ice,

That banner with the strange device,

Excelsior!”

But, “ay, there’s the rub,” these are depths beyond the diving capacities of the “penny-a-liner”—soarings higher than his poor imagination can take its flight, and he must perforce be “as you were,” and resume his wonted task of telling the stories told to him or of narrating what he may note “on the spot”—all for the edification and delectation of that wonderful conglomeration of personalities, yclept the British public. Few, of those who braved the storm, can recount more thrilling incidents than befell Mr. R. Symons, traveller to the well-known firm, Messrs. Cook, Son, & Co., of London, on his journey from Bishop Stortford to Thaxted. He started from Mr. Hart’s, the George Hotel, where he had been staying, in a waggonette supplied by Mr. Bush, of the Chequers Hotel, who sent one of his most experienced drivers, H. Jackson, in charge of his horse and trap. The body of the vehicle was occupied with Mr. Symons’s numerous samples of merchandise. The weather was then about giving indications of what was to come a few hours later on. Stansted was the first calling place, and after doing business at Messrs. Green & Co.’s, the journey was resumed through Elsenham. Here, the storm, which was literally meeting them “right in their teeth,” raged with such intensity that Mr. Symons suggested

the advisability of a retreat. Jackson, however, like the historic drummer boy, had no such word in his vocabulary, and being still hopeful of reaching their destination without a mishap, persisted in pushing onward. The country—or as much of it as could be seen through the blinding downfall—presented the appearance of a snow-clad wilderness—snow, snow, everywhere, and not a vestige of human life to be seen. The road-way was fast becoming indiscernible. The frozen particles seemed to pirouette and dance round and round them in phrenzied madness—and the weary travellers began to fear they had, all too venturously, left “hope behind.” The cold, indeed, told to such an extent upon Jackson that he gradually, as it were, dozed off into the stupor common to all who are long exposed to weather of the kind described, and which is a premonitory symptom of the last sleep of all. The reins fell from his grasp and had to be picked up by Mr. Symons, who drove on in sheer desperation,

“Through the whistling sleet and snow,”

dreading, as he did so, lest the man at his side should die ere help could be obtained. Was there never a house near at hand? Was the man really dead! Mr. Symons called to him but he answered not. Was his fate to be that of the maiden’s father on the “Hesperus?” And in all humility, the Maiden’s Prayer rose to his lips,

“That saved we might be.”

Let alone the nameless horror that would pervade the breast of the strongest-nerved persons if their sole companion in like circumstances were a frozen corpse, was he, too, to have to bear in his life-long memory the saddened reflection of having been, the innocent means truly, but still the means, of causing his hapless fellow-creature’s untimely end?

The agony of mind was well nigh as piercing as the blasts from heaven that unceasingly bore down upon their devoted—it might be doomed—heads. Mr. Symons was beginning to realise the painful fact that he also was rapidly approaching a semi-coma condition, when he was further startled by Jackson suddenly staggering to his feet and falling off the box into the road. Fortunately, they had arrived at a point where assistance could readily be procured. About a hundred yards ahead, Mr. Symons descried a human habitation, and by dint of considerable exertion he managed to drag, for he couldn't carry, the helpless form of Jackson to the house, which turned out to be Armigers Farm, the residence of a veritably good Samaritan, Mr. Arthur Davis. The household were promptly set to work to endeavour to restore animation to Jackson. Meanwhile, Mr. Symons returned for the horse and trap, which he had left in the road, and after a brief rest, started off to the town of Thaxted, distant about two miles, accompanied by one or two of Mr. Davis's men. Upon reaching Thaxted he despatched a brougham for Jackson, whose state had so alarmed Mr. Davis that he sent off for medical advice, and Dr. Watson courageously made the journey on foot from Thaxted to Armigers. Jackson was subsequently removed, in the brougham and in charge of Dr. Watson, to the Rose and Crown Inn, Thaxted, where he was put to bed and well cared for, the doctor remarking that had he been exposed a few minutes longer he would have been past human aid. Happily, the kind treatment and good nursing he received brought him safely round, and the next afternoon he was able to ride his horse home to Stortford, having to take the fields a part of the way, the road in places being completely blocked by huge snowdrifts. The waggonette and Mr. Symons' samples had to remain, snowed

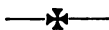
up, until the present week. Mr. Symons himself waited until Thursday (the 20th inst.) when he started on foot to Dunmow, the nearest railway town, which he reached after four or five hours' laborious trudging, he, also, having to travel occasionally "o'er hedges and ditches" on account of the impassibility of the roads, the track of which was only here and there distinctly visible. Mr. Symons says he has been "on the road" for nearly a quarter of a century, but has never been out in or witnessed a snowstorm, like that of the 18th; he further states, of the events which happened to him on that occasion, he shall ever remember with feelings of pleasure the generous and kind treatment of Mr. Arthur Davis. And Jackson has said he will never forget the kindness he received both from Mr. Davis and Mr. Symons. Thus, with every apparent evil, there cometh good—suffering begets fortitude, and humane deeds, one cannot doubt, are inscribed amongst the Divine annals.



ARISTOCRATIC TRAVELLERS.

A TRAVELLER entered a first-class carriage, where two gentlemen were already seated. Conversation became general, and after an hour's ride the train pulled up at a private station, and one of the two got out, bidding "Good day." The T. soliloquizingly queried, "Who the deuce can he be?" The other gentleman replied, "Oh! he is the Marquis of ——." Traveller: "Dear me! What a nice fellow—imagine for one moment an 'upper ten'-ner—a real live sublunary *peeri*—holding 'sweet converse' with a couple of the 'lower five,' like us, as the song says!" We chatted on, when at last the other gentleman left the carriage, saying, "Good day, and allow me to shake your hand, for I have much enjoyed your company." A servant in livery

met the gentleman, and in the distance a magnificent equipage was waiting. "Porter, who is that gent.?" Porter: "The Duke of ——!" Trav. (to himself): "Godfrey Daniel!!! Look out!! My next companion may be an *angel* in disguise!"



NOBLE GUESTS—A SLIGHT MIS-APPREHENSION.

I WAS invited to spend an evening with two friends of the proprietor of the Bull Hotel, Woodbridge. I said I was generally engaged with my friend, Mr. Thurton, of "Odd Folks" notoriety (who was residing in Woodbridge, and does now), and could not very well accept, but would, if possible, drop in later on. I did and the gentlemen were introduced to me as friends of Mr. G. The evening passed very pleasantly, I figuring as a prestidigitateur, &c. On parting one asked me if I ever went to the town of Y——, and on my replying that I used to go, he said, "If ever you come there I shall be pleased if you will give me a call at The Castle." I thanked him, and remarked that, as a rule, I never went out of my own hotel. In the morning Mr. G. informed me that the gentlemen were Lord G. and the Hon. T., and that when one of them invited me to call upon him at "The Castle," his ancestral home (and *not* an Hotel) was meant.



THE SHARPERS AND THE FARMER.—A TIMELY INTERVENTION.

SEVERAL years ago I entered a carriage where three sharpers were playing cards. I was repeatedly invited to join them, but declined. A farmer who came in at once acceded to their solicitations. I was looking from a corner and saw them cleverly and deliberately cheating him. After dropping about £20, he

staked his watch, hoping to recoup himself, but lost all. They again asked me to "try my luck." I said, "Then you are not satisfied with robbing this man?" They replied, "If you repeat that, Sir, you'll be put out of the window." "Well," said I, "I never knew a cheat who was not a coward; and this farmer, knowing now what you are, would fight like a bull-dog, while I feel myself perfectly able and willing to smother two of your kidney. Therefore, you are over-matched and may look out for the fate of swindlers at the next station." A piercing whistle here gave intimation that the "next station" would soon be reached, and, lamb-like, they disgorged their ill-earned "gains" to the owner, who, with myself, left the train. The blacklegs followed us with their looks—frowning vengeance. Moving my hat I wished them "Good bye!" The farmer was brimming over with protestations of gratitude. I merely hinted that, judging from his actions, he could only have been recently released from his mother's apron strings and if he had learned a lesson I was amply repaid.



AN "O'ER TRUE TALE"—SAVED FROM SUICIDE.

A STILL worse case of the bad effect of card playing came under my personal notice. A young Traveller, in Kent, sought me out one evening in a state bordering on madness. He had lost £50—his employer's money—in reckless play, having been induced by a gang—who knew by signs, &c., what each other held—to play high. He had had no pluck, he told me, to sell goods for a week, and was thoroughly broken down—I really thought he would commit suicide. 'Tis a long but "o'er true tale"—it resulted in my letting him have the money on the

condition of his never playing again. I could see natural honesty in him. I was right. He kept his word and paid me the money.



"GREEK" PITTED AGAINST "GREEK" AND NO TUG OF WAR.

I WAS at the White Hart, Newmarket, one race meeting, and having to wait for a customer I occupied my time—as I never attend races—by having a game of billiards. My opponent turned out a regular "bad 'un," and so incensed me that my shoemaker became introduced immediately to his tailor. The marker said, "You have made a mistake, Sir; he's a pal of Bob Travers, the blackman-pugilist, who's down here to-day. No doubt, he'll go out and bring him here; then look out!" "Well, I'll be off," said I, but directly the words had escaped from my lips, the marker drew my attention to the presence of Jim Mace, of "bruising" notoriety, who had just entered the room. "Good," thought I, "I'll go and speak to him; he doesn't know me nor I him, but he'll think I do." "Well, Jim, how are you? I am glad you are here; I have just got into a scrape." I explained the state of affairs and intimated that Bob Travers would soon come in. "Had I better go?" I asked. "No," he confidently replied, "Keep close to me." I popped 5s. into his fist to drink my health with, and "to no broken bones." The room speedily became filled. Many were engaged at "pool," and betting on the colors, as they were sitting down tier above tier. At last the "black" appeared at the door with his friend who evidently pointed me out. Mace was two tiers above me and "covered"—I was standing. The "demon" came near me and began to stamp his feet in the neighbourhood

of mine, with the intention—obvious enough—of “picking a quarrel,” when, lo, there suddenly appeared on the “horizon” a large, horny, white “bunch of fives,” about the size of a leg of mutton, and looking the whiter as it stood out in “bas relief” against the “darkie’s” physiognomy. Travers “observed” it for a moment—as though he had seen it before—and having slowly glanced along the brawny limb he caught the owner’s eye and quietly whispered, “Golly, Jim, is that you?” The fun was worth a crown.



TURNING A CIRCUS CLOWN’S JOKE ON HIMSELF.

NIGHTLY performances were being given in a circus at Norwich during a periodical visit to that city. The clown went through the usual jokes every evening, and one was that a stranger seeing a large number of donkeys in the neighbourhood of a fair, wound up a long tale about them by telling him they were “commercial travellers” from London. The clown followed up his narrative by going round for “coppers” to do a trick with, the “trick” being that he would get some refreshment for himself and family after the “uproar” was over! And of course strangers—who had not been before—would naturally be taken in, and that was where the laugh came in. Hearing of this clownish attempt to ridicule Commercials, a few of us—staying at the Bell—agreed to attend the circus. The “joke” was repeated as before, and when he came to me for coppers I put my hand into my pocket and took out a handful—the clown’s features were radiant to behold, and his lips smacked like the uncorking of a bottle; he opened his hand to receive the “donation”—our hands met, but the contents had gone—up my sleeve! The fellow bawled out,

"Why, we have an Anderson here!" "No," loudly ejaculated a friend, "Only a commercial traveller from London!" Great laughter ensued, and the old joke was eliminated from his "repertoire" for ever afterwards, or at any rate while the circus stayed at Norwich.



ONE GOOD (?) TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

I WILL premise by owning to a weakness for smoking and joking, both enjoyable when not carried too far — *them's* exactly my sentiments! Fancy me, then, seated comfortably in a compartment puffing away at a cigar, and ejecting a fragrant odour around—enter a clerical-looking individual who breaks the silence by rudely asking me to put out my cigar. I smoked on heedlessly, and, possibly imagining me to be deaf, he again bawled out the request in a most unorthodox and peremptory manner. As I still took no notice of him, his passion rose to boiling heat, and snatching the "weed" from my mouth, he threw it out of the window. Without a word of remonstrance I coolly lighted another cigar! His reverence moved to the other end in apparent disgust, but, as he left his basket of fish, which he had brought from Yarmouth for a dinner party, on the seat opposite me, it was subjected to the same treatment as my cigar, and out of the window it flew. Arriving at his destination, he called the guard, and charged me. Guard (*log.*): "Is this true?" "Decidedly." "Why did you do it?" "Ask the rev. gentleman." The R. G. replied, "I merely threw his cigar out of the window, as he would insist on smoking, contrary to my wishes." Guard: "But this is a smoking carriage, Sir!" His reverence "turned tail," and vanished, presumably, in pursuit of his missing parcel.

NOT TO BE SNUFFED OUT BY SMOKE : BY ONE WHO (NOSE) KNOWS.

"Snuffy Matthews" on hearing the following on Smoking—
"A pipe! It is a great soother, a pleasant comforter; blue devils fly before its honest breath; it ripens the brain; it opens the heart; and the man who smokes, thinks like a sage and acts like a Samaritan"—replied in favour of taking snuff: "Knows he who ever took a pinch, knows he the titillating glows that my nose knows. Oh! nose, I'm as fond of thee as any mountain of its snows; I look on thee and feel that joy no Roman (nose) knows."



A VERY "OPERATIC" SELECTION AND ITS RESULT.

BEFORE the adoption of smoking-compartments, certain members of our fraternity, returning to their respective homes on Saturday evenings, generally succeeded in getting together in one carriage to "do a smoke," &c. On one occasion, a non-smoker intruded himself and his ultra opinions into the "select circle." I joined them at another station and found a controversy going on. I was appealed to, and was bound to decide—though much against the grain—in favour of the anti-tobacconist, who was strictly within his rights as set forth in the bye-laws. "But," added I, with a view to *backing up* my friends, "as the bye-laws say nothing about a tin whistle, the gentleman cannot reasonably object to my giving a selection from *Martha*." The "brethren" pronounced it a very finely-played fantasia: not so the "oppositionist," who said it was a "horrid row," and no doubt he was right; at any rate he made himself scarce at the next station, and the company immediately had another "*backer up*."

AN "INFECTIOUS" AND EFFECTIVE STRATAGEM.

AN old gentleman, of a like objectionable turn of mind, frequently seated himself in the same carriage, obviously intent on sitting upon "us" smokers. One evening, as he was seen approaching, a friend requested me to lie down, and with a white handkerchief he bandaged my forehead—wicked man! The obnoxious "venerable" was quietly asked, directly he appeared at the door, if he objected to the "small-pox"? He did!!



SITTING ON THORNS.

AN old lady of the Mrs. Brown calibre, entered a compartment, in which was a party of travellers smoking. She began to cough, and objected to the smoke. She was politely requested to remove to another carriage. Thumping her gingham on the floor, she distinctly refused. The T's were much amused, and puffed away, intending to carry the joke a little further. Mr. W., also a traveller, was picked up at another station, and in a very loud voice said, "Gentlemen, smoking not allowed." The old dame directly exclaimed, "Hoi'm right glad yow 'ave cum, Sur. Hoi've tried tu stop 'em, but it ai'nt no yuse, and hoi've bin sitting on thorns all t'way." "Indeed, madam," said the Basso Profundo, "I sympathise with you, and may I be permitted to ask how that part of your worthy person is, which has been subjected to such torture?" "Whoi, lawk a massy, yow be as bad as the tothers; let me hout!" As the door closed behind her portly person, and the train was starting, the bystanders on the platform were amazed to hear a mighty sound issuing from the carriage, like unto the neighing of a frightened steed—it was the

Basso Profundo, who excelled in the "accomplishment," for few, if any, could imitate the "language" of horses so effectively. The others joined in a chorus of laughter, in honour of the victory over "dear old Sairey."



THE BITER BIT.

A TRAVELLER from Norwich was smoking in the Commercial Room before the usual hour of 9 p.m., when an "Old Roadster" came in and ordered a bottle of wine, to be debited to the other's account. "All right, Sir, I have infringed the rules, and shall be only too pleased to pay the fine, and, furthermore, I can offer you one of the finest cigars made." Both smoked and drank and settled down comfortably, and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, the bottle becoming empty in due course. The Youngster then rang the bell and—holding his watch in his hand—said: "Waiter, bring another bottle of wine in, and place it to this gentleman's account!" It still wanted a few ticks to nine, and the laugh came in on the other side. Oh, Youth, Youth! You will have your sling—yea, and even the Grey-beard may be caught "*napping*."



A "SPILL" OF THE WRONG SORT.

AT the Lion Hotel, Tenterden, Kent, I was once in search of a light for my cigar. Suddenly, a very heavy Farmer, getting on in years, fell to the ground, the legs of the chair he was sitting upon giving way beneath his weight, and when I jocularly said, "Thank you, I was looking for a spill," he savagely remarked as he endeavoured to regain an upright position, "What are all you fools laughing at?"

THE "LIGHTS O' WESTERHAM TOWN."

THE following amusing episode took place at Westerham in Kent. I was seated in my trap ready to start for London, with a cigar in my mouth, but minus matches. I said to a lad in the yard, "Fetch me a penn'orth of lights." He returned after a somewhat prolonged absence with some "lights"—on a skewer! and stated that he had to go to all the butchers in the town before he could get them. Imagine the laugh of the proprietor, Mr. Clarke, who I fetched out that he might behold!!



HOW THE DONKEY WAS MADE TO SPEAK.

TWO travellers were walking and smoking together at B—— in a somewhat lively mood, and spying a donkey drawing a cart laden with apples (proprietress, an elderly female), one said, "I'll bet you two glasses of grog that I will go up to the moke and speak to it, and it shall run away at a furious rate." The bet was accepted: he "whispered" in its ear, and it did all, and more than was required, for it kicked the cart to pieces and scattered the contents. The woman summoned him. The Mayor (a tradesman) presided at the court and asked the Traveller if he pleaded guilty. He answered that he certainly spoke to the donkey, but he knew of no law that could make him responsible for the effect produced. The Mayor said, although that was the case, he felt sure the defendant—as a gentleman—would not allow the poor old lady to be the loser. "Quite so, your Worship, she shall not be anything out of pocket." The Mayor: "Thank you, and being rather curious, I am about to ask you a favour. Will you kindly tell me what you asked the

donkey?" "Well, your Worship, since you put it in that form, I will with pleasure. I merely asked, 'Are you aware that you are brother to the Mayor of B.?' 'No,' said the ass, 'but since you say I am, I will at once go and drown myself!'" (The secret divulged: The Traveller—naughty man—inserted the lighted end of his cigar in the poor creature's ear, enough to make even the dumb call out "Oh! Jerusalem.")



THE MAYOR OF B. AND HIS JOKES.

THE aforesaid Mayor of B. was kind-hearted, and fond of a joke. A Jack Tar was brought before him on a charge of drunkenness. "What is your Christian name?" "Cain, your Worship." "Then you slew your brother Abel?" "No, your Worship, I'm the covey that was slew'd!" In another similar case, the defendant was let off with a caution, the Mayor at the same time plainly intimating that public opinion had dubbed him a bad 'un. "Thank'e, yar Warshup, but du yow naw what public 'pinion sigh about yow?" "No, I don't." "Thay sigh as how yow kiss yar kuke!" "Then public opinion tells a lie." "That's wats hoi sigh, yar Warshup."



"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

TRAVELLING through Bristol some years ago I was much struck with a remarkable concatenation of cognomens of tradesmen in West-street—"Head," "Scull," and "Braines"! They were, respectively, a tinman, a pork butcher, and a timber merchant. The trio combined—speaking appellatively—ought to make, I thought to myself, a Commercial Traveller of the "first water."

THE LAST CHANGING PLACE FOR ALL.

AT Haughley Junction, Old Andrews—a character in his way—was calling out the stations in the sonorous fashion familiar to all frequenters of that station, when he introduced a parenthetical remark that sounded oddly: “Change here for Elmswell, Thurston—Sailor, must not go between the carriages!—and Bury. All change here.” Singular to relate, he has had inscribed on his wife’s tombstone, “All change here!”



“FOOLISH VIRGINS!”

WHILST waiting at a station, the train came in, and I saw two servant girls looking out of a carriage window, one of whom called out, “Porter, porter, our lamp is out!” The Porter addressed replied, “Foolish virgins!” I concluded that porter would soon become a stationmaster.



DISS—APPEARING!

“Where have you come from to-day, old friend?” “From a town, the nearer I approached, *it*—Diss—appeared! Still I got there, and sold a nice parcel.”



GIVING THE GUV’NOR A JOB.

MANY years ago I made my *debut* in Liverpool—it was my first journey in that part of the Old Country—and called on the largest house of business in the busy northern Metropolis. I was showing

my samples to the Buyer in one of the departments, when an elderly personage sauntered up and looked on. Being anxious to clear the counter, I asked him to tie up a few of my parcels. He did, and when we had finished, he patted me on the back, and said, "You are quite right; whenever you see a person standing about doing nothing, always give him a job if you can." I had contemplated tipping him—thank fate I didn't; I had not the slightest idea he was the *guv'nor*!



A WELL-EARNED TWOPENCE.

DRIVING up to a customer's in Dickleboro', a small Norfolk village, I found C. M. and Co.'s traveller engaged with him. Having a long time to wait, I had my cases dropped off, and as my customer sometimes posted me, I sent the trap I came in back to Diss. I walked up and down in the dark with my heavy winter ulster on, until presently a farmer's daughter, in a country cart, stopped opposite the door. She took me for an "odd hand" waiting for a "job"—*so I was*—and said, "Here, my man, will you hold my horse whilst I go in this shop?" I assented. She stayed fully half-an-hour, and only gave me 2d., which I accepted "with thanks!" not liking to hurt her feelings by revealing my identity. The episode furnished food for laughter when I got to business.



BOYCOTTED.

A PERSON started in business at East Dereham, after a few months' experience in London, and, as he fancied he had learnt a thing or two in the Metropolis, he let it go forth that *he* didn't intend dealing through Commercial Travellers, and wouldn't give

them a chance to take him in ! This soon became noised abroad amongst the body, and two celebrated ones tossed up who should have the honour of the first call. A stout burly individual won, and, having entered the shop, said, " Good morning, Sir, allow me to present my card." The tradesman did not seem inclined to take it and the traveller put it down on the counter, when the former immediately whisked it off. The traveller begged him to pick it up. He only answered, " I know you, Mr. I., and I do not require any goods." Traveller : " If you don't pick it up I shall be compelled to make you." He did pick it up and said, " There, Sir, now you can go !" Traveller : " But I have something to say. I represent a first-class Firm, Sir, who requested me to call, and, if I found you respectable, to give you credit for a £20 parcel, provided your father became security ! Good day !" The second traveller was a middle-aged man, nattily attired, quick of speech, and very decided in his manners. " Morning, Sir. Guv'nor in ?" " Yes, Sir, I am the guv'nor." " What ! y—o—u, the guv'nor ! Good heavens ! I couldn't do with you at any price." This little taste of Boycotting worked well. The " guv'nor " afterwards did business with Commercials and was led to admit they were as honest as the day and a jolly set of fellows into the bargain.



JACKAL (JACK HALL) THE LION'S PROVIDER.

MR. JOHN HALL, many years ago, represented a certain House, in a very remarkable way, with the object of pushing a certain speciality. A carriage and pair and livery servant were provided for his use, and with these he went from town to town, the coachman having instructions to stop at the most respectable

tradesmen's establishments in his "line" of business. Directly the horses were pulled up, Mr. H. emerged from his aristocratic-looking vehicle, and asked for a dozen of the said speciality, which of course was not kept in stock—being quite a novelty, as yet comparatively untried—but he was politely informed they would get it for him, and when the order was sent on to the Firm they found they could not be supplied with less than *five* dozen. Before, however, Mr. H. left he had the order booked and paid for the single dozen, stating his servant would call in a week's time for the goods. A "servant" *did* follow up this splendid "entourage" and collected the hundreds of "*one* dozens" so bespoken. The House has now become the largest of its kind. But did the end justify the means? In a sense, Jack Hall was veritably a "lion's provider," and had his "tactics" been then exposed they might have made the "hyenas" of the period laugh, even if they hadn't made a "drumm'd-on wolf" show his molars in expectancy of a toothsome *morceau*! (Why shouldn't I—a "Knight of the Road"—have my little "Zoo" comicalities as well as "Knights of the Shire," whether on the stump or in the Parliamentary arena?)



DRAWING THE BADGER!

A **TRADESMAN** who generally bolted directly a C. T. appeared on the horizon, was brought back from his lair by the annexed quotation from Scott, which I sent him on a piece of paper, marked "private and confidential":—

"Come one, come all, this rock shall fly,
From its firm base as soon as I."

At last he came out and gave me an order, in order to get rid of his patient and persistent visitant.

BEARDING THE LION IN HIS DEN.

A CERTAIN tradesman in B.S.E. had the reputation of possessing very bearish qualities and was barely approachable. A Traveller called upon him—so the story runs—and, having introduced himself and samples, his overtures were met by remarks at once rude and uncharitable. The Traveller retaliated with the readiness of one well skilled in conversational strategy. “Well, Sir,” said he, “I am afraid that when I call again in the afternoon I shall have to report you to the Proprietor !” “Proprietor ! I am the Proprietor ! !” “No, Sir, that statement is not good enough for me.” “Why, Sir ?” “Because I was told on good authority that Mr. C. was a gentleman, and you, Sir, are the very *opposite to one ! Au revoir !*” The Traveller kept his word—he returned in the afternoon as though nothing had occurred, intimated from whom he came, as before, and was requested to show his samples. A large parcel was the result.



A CONTRAST.

A FIRM—the two B's—who have a large concern of many years' standing in a certain county, drove away well nigh all the travellers of high standing, because, forsooth, they had the *impudence* to call and offer their goods for sale at a respectable establishment opposite, which was conducted by the two A's—very enterprising young tradesmen. The result is, the latter, being amiable and so well liked, all the cheap and good lines have been shown them and they have, in a few years, prospered to such an extent that they now take their alphabetical order in the “social scale.”

TRUE FRIENDSHIP.

THERE is a large concern in C——, the proprietor of which looks upon Commercial Travellers as his best friends, and he allows them to have anything they require for their own use at cost price. In the majority of cases our customers belong to this type—they take to us as they do the fixtures, deeming us necessary and indispensable, and, as a rule, it may be said, “We are one happy family—we are, we are, we are ! !”



“THEY CAN’T DO WITHOUT THEM !”

Two celebrated Houses, J. T. & S. and the F. S. W. Co., used to boast that they could do their trade without travellers, and did for many years ; but they have, in these days of fierce competition, been forced to the conclusion that without the association of travellers their business would soon decline, and they now send out more travellers than most Houses.



SHARP PRACTICE.

MR. BBROWN, a Quaker, was solicited by a Traveller to buy mustard at once, as the price had already risen, and was still going up rapidly. “I will tell thee in a short time if I can buy.” He and a neighbour (Mr. Smith) usually obliged each other with goods at cost price, and, instead of going to see his stock, he slipped out behind, and went to Mr. Smith’s. He induced the latter to dispose of all his available stock, and had it removed home, and upon again presenting himself to the Traveller, he said, “Friend, I do not want any, as I have plenty in stock at the

old price." The Traveller next waited upon Mr. Smith, telling him also the state of the market. "Why," said he, "My friend, Mr. Brown, has just cleared me out at the old price!" He was, therefore, compelled to buy at the advanced rate, and when he met Mr. B. next day, he pointedly remarked, "Friend, thou hast taken me in—once bitten, twice shy." Mr. B., without a qualm, answered, "Friend, thou art a fool!"



SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION OF A NOVEL KIND.

AN assistant in a large drapery establishment was troubled with a fidgetty old lady, who wanted a shawl of a certain pattern. The right pattern was eventually produced, but the price was too low. As she had already taken up a deal of his time to no purpose, he resorted to a clever dodge, though much to be condemned. He got another shawl of the same quality and pattern, and charged her double the price—this suited her well at the time, and she bought it. But she brought it back in two or three days, and complained to the proprietor that it was dear—she told him she had compared it with one from another shop. "Let me see it, madam. Why, dear me! it is only marked half the price you say you paid for it." He sent for the young man who served her, and told him business at his establishment should be carried on strictly on moral principles, and that unless he could justify himself morally, nay more, scripturally, he would on the morrow discharge him. The morrow came. "Well, Sir, can you justify your conduct?" "Yes, Sir." "And how, Sir? Mind—scripturally." Assistant: "She was a stranger, and I took her in!" "Go to your duties, Sir, and don't let it occur again."

A DICKEY TO THE RESCUE !

Mr. B., representing a Bradford House, met another traveller in the same line and from the same town. They came out of the same station, and were going to the same customer, about three miles away ; but each knew that there was only one trap to be had, and that was full half-a-mile away in a contrary direction to their customer ; and although they were very friendly, and an arrangement should have been made between them, the other rushed off on foot to secure the said trap (he being younger and fleeter). However, Mr B. was quite equal to the emergency ; he saw a yokel with a dickey and cart, and on enquiring as to its qualities, &c., got the man to take his luggage and himself to his customer in a marvellously short space of time ; and, having explained the fun, the customer gave him a rattling order, much to the chagrin of Mr. B.'s friend, who had just driven up in his smart conveyance. Mr. B., by the aid of the dickey and cart, was in time to catch the next train ; but his friend did not, as the time he took in trying to effect a sale (but to no purpose) caused him to miss it, and he had to wait several hours.

**A WAGER LOST—AN ORDER WON.**

A DRAPER, in a large way of business, at Folkestone, generally spent an hour or two in the commercial room of the Rose Hotel when he knew there was a party of us staying there. J. M., a representative of a wholesale firm, was present at such a gathering, and asked the tradesman if he were going to give him a line in hosiery that journey. "No, my friend," was the answer, "I don't think your house does the thing A 1—in fact

I have a very large order in my pocket which I am going to send up to another house to-morrow." "Nay, nay," said the T., "I'll bet you glasses round you haven't such an order in your pocket." "Done," returned his genial customer, who blew an extra cloud of smoke from his "churchwarden," as he produced the document from his pocket book, and handed it over to the Traveller, saying, in satisfied tones, "What do you think of it now?" "Why," naively rejoined he of the road, "I think I have lost the bet, and, gentlemen, I beg you will all have your glasses filled at my expense whilst I am copying this order." The ruse succeeded, and a fresh fillip was given to the conversation that followed.



TAKEN FOR A "PRIVATE" CUSTOMER.

A MEMBER of a City Firm saw a "private" customer being served, and instead of condemning the practice entirely, said, "They have no business here, but if they will come, put on an extra profit." A few days after he himself went to one of the departments and made a purchase, and the next day called again and asked another assistant the price of the material of which he had previously bought a piece. "Sixpence per yard, Sir." "Dear me," said he, "I paid 8d. for the same yesterday." "Ah, I expect he took you for a 'private' customer, Sir!"



NOT LOST, NOR STOLEN.

ANOTHER head of a Firm walked in, and, seeing no one about in one of the departments, instantly—and, as he imagined, un-

observed—put a piece of silk under his coat, and passed on into his private counting house, intending, no doubt, to ask the parties in charge to account for the abstracted parcel. But he hadn't been there very long before he received an invoice, and the silk was entered against him to his private account. He saw not, yet he was seen.



A PRINCIPAL—BUT WHERE'S THE PRINCIPLE ?

FRIEND H., an old stager, was shewing some carpet patterns which he had spread on his customer's counter, and, during the absence of the buyer—who had been called away for a few minutes—another traveller came in, and began to open his patterns. Mr. H. went up to him and said, "I am engaged with Mr. ———." "Well," sharply answered the intruder, "I can't help that ; I want to see him, and at once. In fact, I am a principal of a firm, and that's quite enough for you !" "Is it indeed ? Do you see that old woman out there with an apple cart ? Why, *she* is a *principal*, and certainly possessed of more honest *principles* than you. Get out at once, or I shall be impelled to kick you there !" The proprietor thought Friend H., though "warm," was quite right.



EVERYTHING WAS GOOD EXCEPT—THE CUSTOMERS !

THE eldest son and rising hope of a Principal was sent on a journey, his father hoping he would "take" to it. The young gentleman returned, delighted with the travelling to and fro, and the amenities and conviviality of commercial room life, but—the customers ! No, he couldn't put up with *them* at any price !

A GOOD PERFUMER, BUT A BAD HAIR (HARE) CUTTER.

ANOTHER Son of a Principal was on his first journey, and, in order to be the "observed of all observers," flourished his highly scented pocket handkerchief to show off his diamond rings. The Coms. were just about dining, and the President requested him to carve the hare. He attempted, and made a pretty mess of it. A gentleman who volunteered to do it for him said, "Pardon me, Young Gentleman, you may be a good perfumer, but you certainly are a bad hair (hare) cutter!" A hint of this kind timely given is equal to the proverbial "stitch in time."

**A WELSHMAN'S RECEIPT.**

A BRISTOL Traveller opened an account with a young Welshman who had just started in business, and did not call on him again for several months. Meanwhile the goods ought to have been paid for, and several letters were sent, requesting immediate payment, but no reply came from him. When the Traveller waited upon him a second time, and asked why he had not paid, and how it was he had not answered the letters, the Welshman said, "Ah, indeed, to goodness, you was a wicked bad man. You was know I was pay it some long time, and you see, indeed, whatever I was shew you the receipt." He returned exultantly with a Post Office Order that he had filed! and in a tone indicative of wounded feelings he exclaimed, "Who was the thief—Taffy or you indeed, now?"

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHITE AND BLACK.

THE regular Traveller of a Bristol tobacco house, being ill, one of the firm took his place. He called on a Welsh customer who refused to pay his account. Taffy said he had misrepresented himself, and added, "You was impostor, you see. I do know Mr. W. right well from likeness, I was have him on his papers : he was a black man, you see !" producing the "nigger's head"—trade mark !



ANOTHER WELSH MIXTURE.

A TRAVELLER inquired after the health of a Welsh tradesman who had been dangerously ill with fever. The ancient Briton said, "I was better now than when I was worse you see." Traveller : "I am pleased to hear it, Mr. Jones, and how is business ?" "Well, I was take stock last month and was have £500 more stock and was do £200 less trade, and I didn't reckon empty boxes, cords, wrappers, and five little pigs ! Yes, indeed."



PASSING THE BIGGEST OF BILLS—'TIS REALLY (DISRAELI) SO.

A HOT political discussion was going on one evening at the Red Lion, Cambridge, the question at issue being the relative merits of two rival statesmen. A disputant declared that "Dizzy"—I use his own words—never passed a great Bill in his life. I ventured to affirm that the statement was false. "Prove it, Sir," quoth he, somewhat knowingly. "Well, gentlemen," I began, "You all know that Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister

before Mr. Gladstone? Surely then, he passed the Biggest of Bills!" That was a "poser" for the gentleman who impugned my assertion: Thought I, "I have thee on the hip," as the *quid pro quo* of Gratiano to Shylock in the *Merchant of Venice* rose to my lips.



A LUCKY SHOT.

"PIGEON SHOOTING" was the topic of conversation one evening in the commercial room of the Angel, Yarmouth. A few were no mean adepts at the sport, judging from their narrations of what they had done, and their assertions of what they could do, and at last I was asked if I knew anything of shooting. I said I was rather surprised at the question—"Haven't you seen the record of my accomplishments in *Bell's Life*?" I exclaimed (in jest). Some thought they had, and others couldn't remember. "Well," interrupted another, "let's go outside in the fair, and try our luck at the tunnel." "Agreed," we all rejoined. I had to "lead the way." This was rather a poser, and I must confess I felt somewhat confused, because a gun is a weapon that I seldom handle. I was afraid lest some of the powder should get into my eyes, and their lids were closely lowered as I pulled the trigger. I expected a laugh, but my temporary blindness had been overlooked by the spectators in their eagerness to note the flight of the bullet, and instead I heard simultaneously the tinkling of a bell and the ejaculation, "Bull's eye, by George." I turned round with the air of a "veteran," and coolly said, "There's a 'sample' for you," no one being more surprised at the result than the firer. The others tried in vain to pierce the "charmed circle," and I was pressed to give further proof of my skill.

"No, gentlemen," said I, "this is not a common amusement for good shots; I gave you an idea of my capabilities that *might* be repeated *ad libitum*!"



AN UNACCEPTABLE OFFER.

A FRIEND of mine, from the Emerald Isle, joined in the Commercial sing-song at the Bull, Sittingbourne. One gentleman excused himself from singing on the ground that he had lost his teeth, when my friend exclaimed, "Bedad, now! you are welcome to moine, just to sing the song with, Sur!" and, suiting the action to the word, he dropped the set from his mouth and pushed them towards him on the table. They were nasty looking masticators, and the offer was declined with thanks.



HOW JACK ABEL WAS "TAKEN IN."

THE late Jack Abel, of Norwich, "hotel proprietor and horse dealer," was noted for having all his faculties about him, and although there are "tricks" innumerable in the buying and selling of horses, no one was known to have got the "whip hand" of him. He was, however, once just a "little" beguiled by a couple of Commercials, who put their heads together for the purpose. One was known to him, but the other—H.V., of London—was a stranger, and was introduced to him as Monsieur So-and-so, a representative of the then Provisional Government of France, who had come over from Paris entrusted with *carte blanche* to purchase horses for the French cavalry and artillery. H. V. was tall,

dark, affable, and of prepossessing appearance, and, with his inimitable broken English, readily passed off for a genuine "Johnny Crapaud." His shrugs, his "vat you calls," "ah, tres biens," &c., and general *empressement* told upon Abel, who, in anticipation of the golden prize in view—for a big order was on the *tapis*—"stood" champagne till further orders. The interview ended, the "Mounseer" adieuxed and au revoird in a most fraternal manner—the compact was all but "signed and sealed"—and in a day or two at the latest, he would return to see "les chevaux" and complete the bargain. Shortly after, Abel, who was highly elated, visited a townsman—who also kept an hotel—to have a friendly glass over his good fortune. He entered by the archway leading to the stables and heard a gentleman, who was standing with his back towards him, making an amusing observation in the purest of English. Abel thought he remembered the voice and form—had he been "sold"? H. V. turning round, saw who was approaching, and resumed his impersonation of the Gaul in pursuit of horses. But Jack was "fly"—he admitted his simplicity in *very* characteristic language, and the Travellers thought they could afford to reciprocate his *hospitality* at his friend's *hostelry*.



GLADIATEUR IN "DISGUISE."

THE aforesaid Jack Abel had the privilege of purchasing "left off" thoroughbreds at Newmarket and elsewhere, and was shown one for which £15 was asked. He took stock of the supposed "weed" and shook his head, saying £10 was all it was worth. The horse was Gladiateur "out of condition," and it is needless to say the sale didn't take place!

CANINE SAGACITY.

I HEARD two travellers, the other day, telling tales about the sagacity of dogs. No. 1 declared (and I believe the story has been recorded in print as a "fact") that a shilling was put under a stone, and a bet made that the dog—a retriever—who saw it done, should fetch the shilling and bring it home after being taken twenty miles. The dog, however, did not return for two days. The sequel was this: The stone was too heavy for the animal to remove, and a gentleman passing by, being attracted by its antics, lifted the stone, and pocketed the "treasure trove" that he found concealed beneath. The dog followed him with seeming docility, and so taken was he by its appearance and fondness, that he allowed it to sleep in his bedroom. In the middle of the night a crash was heard, the dog, faithful to its trust, escaping through the window with the trousers containing the shilling, which was marked, and returning in triumph to its proud owner. Traveller No. 2 affirmed he knew of a similar, but still more remarkable case. A gentleman showed his dog a £5 note, and made a wager that he would hide it, and that the dog should find it out, although first removed a long distance off. Denouement: The dog turned up with (apparently) nothing in its mouth. Its master anxiously said, "Where's the note, sir?" The animal remained doggedly silent, and the question was repeated in a louder tone, when, one by one, five "golden sovereigns" were dropped from its mouth into the outstretched hand of its master. The intelligent quadruped had not only found the note, but had actually cashed it at the bank! T. No. 1: "That's a lie!" T. No. 2: "Well, aren't we both telling 'em?"

A TRUE TALE OF A DOG.

THE foregoing may or may not be fiction, but I have no reason to doubt the ensuing instance of doggish instinct, which I had from an authentic source, and as having occurred only some few years since. Mr C. G., a traveller, when within a few miles of Bury St. Edmund's, invited another traveller, Mr. Macdona, to accompany him thither. The first named had a brown retriever bitch, named "Sarah," with him, and he said to his friend, "You see the dog in front?" "Yes." "I'll now throw one of my gloves in the ditch on our right without letting her see it, and after we have gone half a mile she shall fetch it." She did so satisfactorily. Mr. M. asked, "Will she do the same with my glove?" "Yes," replied Mr. G. Having secured his opportunity, Mr. M., unperceived by their four-footed attendant, threw a glove into the ditch on their left. They drove on the specified distance; the dog was ordered to retrieve the article, and was again successful. Mr. G. further informed his companion that when he fed his horse he sometimes directed the dog to "keep watch," and during the feeding process all comers were kept at "bay"—none daring to approach with impunity. On their arriving at The Bell, Bury, he put his assertion to the test, and "'ware dog" was the order of the period during which the horse was enjoying his repast. "The lords of the universe" may learn a good deal from the so-called "brute creation," who possibly have a hereafter in store for them—as is argued by eminent naturalists* and others—as well as the human race.

* *Vide* Works of the Rev. J. G. WOOD, M.A., &c.

EQUINAL "MNEMONICS."

AFTER driving about two miles from a town I had to return for a special parcel which the "boots" had over-looked. The next journey, as I passed the same spot—and holding my reins loosely—the horse made a sudden swerve round to retrace its steps, possibly remembering having had to do so three months before.



HE KNEW THE ROUNDS.

A TRAVELLER, in the Eastern Counties, lent an acquaintance his horse—an old and valued "friend"—and four-wheeler for the Sunday, to take his family out for a drive. The knowing hack would insist on stopping at every shop in the villages, at which his master called, and wouldn't start again until the driver got off and remained a certain time.



THE "SKID" AS A WEAPON OF DEFENCE.

DRIVING up a hill one evening I remember being accosted by a man of doubtful appearance who wanted a ride, and was in the act of mounting up without permission. Opening my dash-box I drew out a piece of wood—used for a "skid"—and presented it—as though it were a pistol—at his head, and, like a flash of lightning, he was off.



A "MATTHEWSIAN" INCIDENT—"ALL RIGHT, CHARLIE!"

I AM not averse to seeing a good play when opportunity presents itself, and I am convinced that a little histrionic recreation,

after a wearying round in a provincial or any other town, is a good sedative. I was much amused at an unrehearsed incident that was introduced into the advertised play—"Chatter v. Clatter," I believe—at the Yarmouth theatre on one of my visits to that home of the drama in the "long time ago." There was but a scanty "house" and the principal performer had presumably taken cognizance of the fact in his "mind's eye," as well as observing it by means of his physical orbs, for directly he saw the state of affairs he excused his wife's appearance on the plea of indisposition. A "pit"-man, with the indulgent familiarity of a bosom friend, bawled out at the top of his voice, "All right, Charlie, go on by yourself!" The actor was no other than Charles Matthews.



MISTAKEN FOR MINISTERS—SUSPENSORY THREATS.

Two C. T.'s, well known in the Eastern Counties, have a penchant for wearing clerical looking hats of large dimensions. They often met, and coming together once in a railway carriage, one remarked to the other (who had donned a head covering of an ordinary pattern), "Brother, hast thou left the faith?" "No," he replied, "my proper tile is being done up." In the course of conversation, the taller and rougher one let out an adjective or two of a compromising nature, upon which an old lady, who sat there, said she was surprised, and that if she knew the Bishop she would write and have him *suspended*! "You be *h-a-n-g-e-d*! madam," retorted he. Surely, no other than "Old G." would have thus answered.

A DOUBLE MISTAKE.

A TALE is current respecting a Quaker and a Traveller who were riding outside a stage coach. The former offered the latter a pinch of snuff. Thanks followed and they became talkative. After the lapse of a certain time, the Quaker wanted another pinch, but he couldn't find his box—a silver one. At length he charged the Traveller with having taken the box. "Nay," said the T. "But thou hast, Friend." "Very good, Sir; then we'll suppose that's conclusive." The Quaker felt again and found it! "Friend, I have to apologise most humbly." "Don't mention it, Sir," replied the Traveller, "We have both been mistaken; I took you for a gentleman, and you took me for a thief."



AN UNEXPECTED ORDER FROM A "FRIEND."

A TRAVELLER tried very hard to open an account with a Dunmow tradesman, and at last prevailed on a friend to intercede for him. The tradesman (who was a member of the Society of Friends) said, "Well, tell him to call again on me at *four o'clock in the morning*!" The Traveller did, rattling the door and throwing gravel at the bedroom window, until the sash was raised and a head thrust forth. "What dost thou require, Friend?" "The order that you so kindly promised me through our mutual acquaintance, Mr. —." "Take thy order book and write"—"Right, Sir!" interpolated the Traveller—"One gross of double-handled chamber utensils!" and the window was closed with a bang. The order, being a very "special" one,

was sent off to the Potteries for immediate execution, and in due course the goods were delivered. The astonished Friend endeavoured to repudiate the transaction, treating it as a joke, but he was too late in the day, and was bound by Commercial and other law to take them. His successors have a few in stock to this day, as a curiosity !



“POST-DATED !” WON BY A BABY.

Two friends (one, a traveller, named Forth, a “chum” of mine) married on the same day—years gone by. Mr. F. proposed a bet—that the one who had the good fortune to be presented with a son or daughter first should be entitled to a new hat at the other’s expense. Mr. F. called round in about seven weeks and asked how matters were progressing. “Pretty well !” was the rejoinder, “And how is it with you ?” “Can’t say yet.” Another seven weeks passed by and the same questions were repeated. Mr. F.’s answer was still a doubtful one, but his friend, with fatherly pride, brought out a “bonny, bouncing boy” in his arms. Mr. F. paid, but sadly complained of not having had a fair start for the hat—it was *felt*, especially ! The joyful Pater, with an encouraging and patronising smile, said, “Go thou, Forth, and do likewise !” Memo : the start was of no importance ; he is still childless.



IMPROMPTU “MUSE”-INGS.

The Commercial Brotherhood are not entirely wrapt in professional profundity—they are not all “of the shop, shoppy.”

We have our "poets"—as well as our musicians, vocal and instrumental, our art connoisseurs, etc.—although to a certain extent, most of their effusions are

"Born to blush unseen

And waste their sweetness on the desert air."

That is, they never see the light of publicity through the Press. Perhaps, some day, one of our order, endowed with the necessary literary genius, may set himself the task of writing "the rise and progress of commercial travelling," and collate therein as many of the sayings and doings of our intellectual "giants" as are worthy of being rescued from the silence of oblivion, or the changeful and wearing process of tradition. Would that I were capable of the undertaking—it should be performed *con amore*.



WHO WOULD NOT WISH TO DIE ?

Whilst staying at Bristol, in lodgings, my landlady, a widow, lost her only daughter under peculiarly melancholy circumstances, and at her request I persuaded a colleague, who was a worshipper of the Muse, to write a few elegiac lines for the tombstone. I told him the particulars, and there and then, in the space of five minutes, he penned the following :—

Who would not wish to die, to die like thee—

Ere the care-stricken world had smit thy cheek.

Ta'en from thy sojourn here, so soon to be

An angel 'mid the pure and meek ?

Sleep on, my child, my heart shall brood no more

In silent watchings o'er thy mould'ring clay.

Thou art a cherub now, on Heaven's bright shore,

Thou art an angel in celestial day !

"THE IDOLATRY OF THE HEART."

UNDER the above title my much esteemed friend, Mr. James A. Griffiths, formerly a traveller and now settled down in Manchester, wrote a poem, which was considered of sufficient merit by the late Lord Palmerston (then Premier) to warrant him in granting the author £40 from the Royal Bounty. The theme is a grand one and the composition is worthy of being perpetuated amongst the "pearls" of British poetry. How rejoiced should I be—and thousands of others, too—I thought, if I could but get his permission to insert it in my "reminiscences." And when I put the question to him, in writing, let his answer (with copy of the verses appended) explain how gracefully the request was acceded to:—

41, PIMBLETT STREET, CHEETHAM,

MANCHESTER,

November 8th, 1884.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

Your communication gave me intense pleasure to find you still bearing on the tablet of your mind some memory of me; and I hasten with the greatest satisfaction to carry out your wish, viz., to forward copy of my poem, "Idolatry of the Heart."

I scarcely thought it could possibly ever come within the compass of my power to render you the most trifling service, and to do so to-day in so small a matter is the greatest joy to me, when I remember with loving gratitude the many acts of goodness you have vouchsafed to me in the days for ever fled.

Believe me, my dear old friend,

Ever sincerely yours,

JAMES A. GRIFFITHS.

THE POEM.

I see an ocean of despair around,
And desolate heaps of shattered hopes lie there
Piled on the beach—like stranded wrecks they seem,
Or risen ghosts of childhood's happier dream ;
And as I view them something says to me—
“ These are the fruits of thine IDOLATRY.”

I see but phantoms of the things I loved,
The spectral forms of dear ones ever gone,
Like meteors flashing through a murky sky,
Stars of my boyhood—gems of days gone by,
Leaving the chaos of my memory
In boding gloom for my IDOLATRY.

For oh ! my young heart gush'd out like a fount,
That nurtures flowers around its margin ever ;
But now the blooms are dead that near it grew
Its waters poisoned, stagnant, blackened, too ;
I've wept to feel such changes, while by me,
A Spirit passing cried—“ IDOLATRY.”

I stood again beside the well-known brook,
Arch'd o'er with shivering willows—the loved haunt
Of my unclouded boyhood ; but there came
A strange wild beating o'er my fevered brain.
Oh ! what a thrill of joy came over me
To view the shrine of Young IDOLATRY.

There was a speechless chill upon the wold—
A death-like stillness o'er a world of life,
Not e'en a chirp from one leaf-hidden bird—
I started, trembled, when a leaflet stirred ;
But soon the breezy lisplings from the lea,
Woo'd back my spirit to IDOLATRY.

Sweet boyhood's altar, where I raised
Ideal worship into rapture wild
Thy dear trees look the same and quivering, say—
“ See the old stream still murmurs on its way :
The only remnant left unchanged to thee,
Of thy first offerings to IDOLATRY.”

Within my soul I fondly raised
A throne of delicate network, firmly bound
By young and fervent passion so intense,
The light of love hath never set from thence :
Where is my idol? tell me, where is she?
Ta'en for the sin of Young IDOLATRY.

Ah ! transient dream of young impiety,
The roll of rivers and the chaunt of bees ;
"Thou mayest not worship thus," a Spirit said,
"Nor any other idol in the stead
Of thine Almighty Fashioner, for see,
No blessing rests on thine IDOLATRY."

Oh ! human love, I've given to thee—
My earliest years—my boyhood's ardent days :
And the dear dream, to which I've clung till now,
Lies chill and cold upon my fretted brow :
The last of many tokens left to me,
How much heaven hates such deep IDOLATRY.

And thus shall all things wither, which the heart
Too fondly prizeth ; are not blossoms strewn
By too much rain? even so the bloom
Of mortal worship hath a certain tomb—
All wide and gaping for the loved that be,
Held with a doting-like IDOLATRY.

Thine is of grief—an empire wild,
My stricken heart—within thy founts what tears
Lie ready to gush forth ; but scald and surge within,
To purify my heart and purge from sin,
To clear my faith, O God, and guide to Thee
A sorrow-laden soul's IDOLATRY.

A DOGGREL LETTER.

I solicited permission to publish certain "lines" written by a brother on the road, well-known for his versifying ability, and received the following characteristic reply :—

NORTH WALSHAM,

Nov., 1884.

MY DEAR S.,

To put my doggrel rhyme into your prosaical pot,
Would, I'm afraid, be the means of spoiling the lot ;
And to tell you the truth, friend, I'd much rather not
Let those lines depart again from my humble cot ;
For when they were published, I got it so hot,
Was called a Jackass and the devil knows what :
Undoubtedly, the poem was nothing but rot,
And didn't pay for the ink—not even a dot ;
But whether it was good or whether it was not,
I shouldn't like to cast on your pamphlet a "blot"—
Thanks for your compliment, it shall ne'er be forgot,
Whilst, yours truly, has breath left to push a "job lot."

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE J.



A YANKEE EXPRESSION HIT OFF.

Mr. Thos. Mill, of Fremington, Devon, a farming friend, was full of poetical "quips." He had "travelled" the United States, and in a book he published of his tour, he thus hit off a favourite Yankee expression :—

They "guess" it will,
They "guess" it wont,
They "guess" it shall,
They "guess" it shant,
They "guess" it right, ...
They "guess" it wrong,
They "guess" by night,
And all day long !

LAWYERS AND THEIR WORD TWISTINGS.

Having to defend himself in a case in which he was concerned at Barnstaple, he flung—metaphorically speaking—the following telling philippic at his opponents' heads :—

I know you lawyers can with ease
Twist words and meanings how you please.
Ne'er read a will, was ever known,
But what you make that will your own ;
For when you read, it's with intent
To find out meanings never meant.
Your hands would have a paltry gleanings,
Could every one express his meaning.



A PARADOX—DONE AND NOT DUNN.

A Mr. H., "one of us," threw off a paradoxical distich, after marrying a Miss Dunn, whose father is a C. T. of *high standing* !! and a very clever mimic and vocalist :—

When the wooing was doing, 'twas Dunn who me cheered,
And when it was done, *alas* ! Dunn, disappeared.



"PUN" ISHED.

This reply was made in my hearing to a self-conceited wit, who repeated the stale "joke" that a man who made a "pun" would pick a pocket :—

If I am to be *punished* for every *punny pun*-I-shed,
Find me a *punny-shed*, wherein to put my *punish'd* head.

A COMPOSER OF SONGS.

THE late Mr. Hansell, of the Rose and Crown Hotel, Sudbury, during the time he represented the firm of Copestakes and Co., composed the words—and music also, I believe—of the well-known songs, “If I had a donkey,” “All round my hat,” etc.



HOW COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS BECAME “KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD.”

TRADITION has handed down this legend of kingly courtesy : “The ” Regent, while residing at Brighton, noticed the passing to and fro of men, with parcels under their arms, &c. He was struck with their gentlemanly appearance, and, as he could not conceive they were porters, he questioned his Lord in Waiting respecting them. His R.H. was informed that they were “Commercial Travellers,” whose loyalty to the throne was beyond the shadow of a doubt—that, in fact, they were, as a body, the most loyal of His Majesty’s subjects, as a day never passed that His Majesty’s health was not drunk by them in bumpers of wine. His Royal Highness, on hearing this, exclaimed in a tone of pleased excitement, “Indeed, my Lord, then, from this day, we proclaim them ‘Sir Knights of the road.’” May we ever prove ourselves worthy of the designation.

NOTE.—As it is impossible for the public, by a mere verbal description, to understand and appreciate fully the “Freemasonry” of our body, I have not attempted to depict it.



EPILOGUE.



If, after perusing these "reminiscences," the reader has grown languid and is inclined to look "In a mov'd sort, as if he were dismay'd," I would say—

"Be cheerful, Sir :
Our revels now are ended. These, our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air—into thin air—
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind ! We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep ! "



